



Webb

7 0 Y E A R S A T K E N N Y S

An exhibition of 45 new paintings by Kenneth Webb celebrating 70 years
exhibiting at the Kenny Gallery, Galway | September 1 – 26, 2023

Webb

70 YEARS AT KENNYS

An exhibition of 45 new paintings
by KENNETH WEBB
celebrating 70 years exhibiting at the
Kenny Gallery, Galway
Official opening September 1st, 2023

Guest Speaker SUSAN WEBB



No-one ever needs an excuse to hold a Kenneth Webb exhibition, but some landmarks deserve to be particularly recognised. This is one such. A relationship between gallery and artist is often a precarious one, so it is with especial pride that we celebrate seventy years of continuous and close collaboration between Kenny's Art Gallery and artist Kenneth Webb.

This exhibition touches on several of Webb's steps during those seventy years, the different subjects and styles that he has explored, and follows the phases in his life underlying his art. So many aspects of life influence an artist's work.

39. *Meadow's Delight*
Oil on Canvas, 8.5x6.5in

(cover image No.1. A Field of Poppies,
1916, Oil on Canvas, 48x36in (detail)



38. *Marbled Lily Pads*, Oil on Canvas, 9x12in

Artist's Statement

I first met Maureen and Des Kenny in the early 1950's. At the time, Joan and I were camping around Ireland during my summer break from college. After Donegal, our next target was Conamara and Galway. Whilst sketching in High Street in the city, I wandered into Maureen's lovely little bookshop. We got chatting and she was interested in my sketches. I left a few and said I would call again next year. To my surprise, all had been sold and this was the moment when a long and fruitful association began. Soon Kennys developed the bookshop and opened up a gallery which exhibited many well-known Irish artists.

After resigning from the College of Art, I set up The Irish School of Landscape Painting which developed rapidly. We opened summer courses in County Down, Donegal, Conamara, Cork and Dublin. During the 'troubles' in the North, we had an uncomfortable time. My father died in 1974 and we moved to Barnham Grange in Gloucestershire where my mother had a separate flat.

In 1972, we bought a derelict cottage in Ballinaboy and after some work on the cottage, added a large studio to the footprint of the old house. We brought many students there for our summer painting holidays, and our relationship with the Kennys developed. With the



*A portrait of the artist as a young man
(Overleaf, Kenneth Webb painting on
Derrigimlagh Bog, Photograph: Dean Kelly)*

help of a very good friend, John James Conneely, my wife and children converted the bog belonging to the cottage into a series of small interlocking gardens, including a large pond for waterlilies. Every day I resided in Ballinaboy, my favourite place, listening to the peace was a joy.

My early interest was in academic paintings and impressionist figurative work. The many views of Conamara featuring stone walls gave me the opportunity to indulge my love of texture and pattern and I began to apply a strong pattern/design to street scenes, harbours, bogs and coasts.

By now, in the 80's and 90's, I was able to leave behind the commissions of the earlier years and devote myself to painting what inspire me personally.

The Kenny Gallery published in 1990 a beautifully illustrated book featuring my more personal individual work of bog land and waterlilies – a far cry from my earlier landscapes, fair days and of course, poppies. A further book, supported by the Kenny Gallery was published in 2003 by the Antique Collector's Club written by Josephine Walpole and it also had a wide circulation.

For me, the approach to abstract landscape can easily become decorative and the connection with nature is

lost. I taught abstract design in college and though I use an element of construction in my larger work, unless it “grabs you”, I consider it a failure. My style has endeavoured to unite these opposite elements in a natural setting. For me, the atmosphere of the natural landscape – Constable refers to it as “feeling” --- is paramount. I paint because I have a strong emotional impact from my subject – hence bogland, waterlilies and the twinkling beauty of flowers.

This exhibition has brought together a wide range of my work, mainly in the west of Ireland, over the past seven decades. My friendship with the Kenny family has made this possible so thank you Tom, Conor, Monica and Dean Kelly.

KENNETH WEBB, August 2023





30. *Where the Sunray Falls*, Oil on Canvas, 16x24in



35. *Solace*, Oil on Canvas, 10x14in

Tom Kenny Reflects on 'Webb, 70 Years at Kennys'



*Tom Kenny and Kenneth Webb
pictured at the Kenny Gallery*

Kenneth Webb and his wife Joan first came to Galway in 1953. He stood at the top of High Street which was quite drab at the time and was intrigued by a splash of colour half way down. These were handwoven rugs by Mrs. Fretwell and they were hanging at the door of Kennys Bookshop. Kenneth was intrigued and went in to chat with Maureen Kenny. She told him how she had introduced handcrafts to her stock in order to liven the shop up. He asked about the possibility of introducing original artworks as well, and so began a 70-year long relationship.

He would arrive a few times a year with new work and even then his work was distinguished by his use of colour. In 1963, we hosted his first solo exhibition in Galway in High Street. In 1968, our parents converted half of our house in Salthill into the first architect-designed art gallery in the west, and in 1973, 50 years ago, Kenneth held his second one-man show there and has followed that up with about 20 exhibitions since.

He has never forgotten his first impression of Conamara *"The magical play of light after the rain, reflecting off the water and intensifying the colours of the world, it comes back to me every time I set foot in Conamara and my heart knows it has come home, my soul is at peace"*.

This extraordinary sense of place has been the most important element in his work for some fifty years now. He finds the colour there richer, the texture more varied and the light more mystical and totally entrancing. His fresh and uncluttered vision is like a sponge that likes to soak up the sense of atmosphere around him and recharge it emotionally on canvas with the accent on the marvellous colours around him. He finds inspiration and motivation in every overgrown ditch, in old and neglected bog cuts, in every leaf and stone. Kenneth does not like crowds or smoky pubs and always found the emptiness of Conamara very welcoming.

“Whenever I am taken over by a theme, I seem to have to start all over again and invent my own pictorial structure”, so he has always experimented with his own freer romantic ideas and personal concepts using direct colour in a subjective expressionist manner.

Most of his painting was done plein-air, standing in the landscape absorbing it in order to capture its essence on canvas. Today, age and poor health have combined to keep him studio bound and so his landscapes now come from memory and from his heart, old themes with new colours, abstractions and approaches.

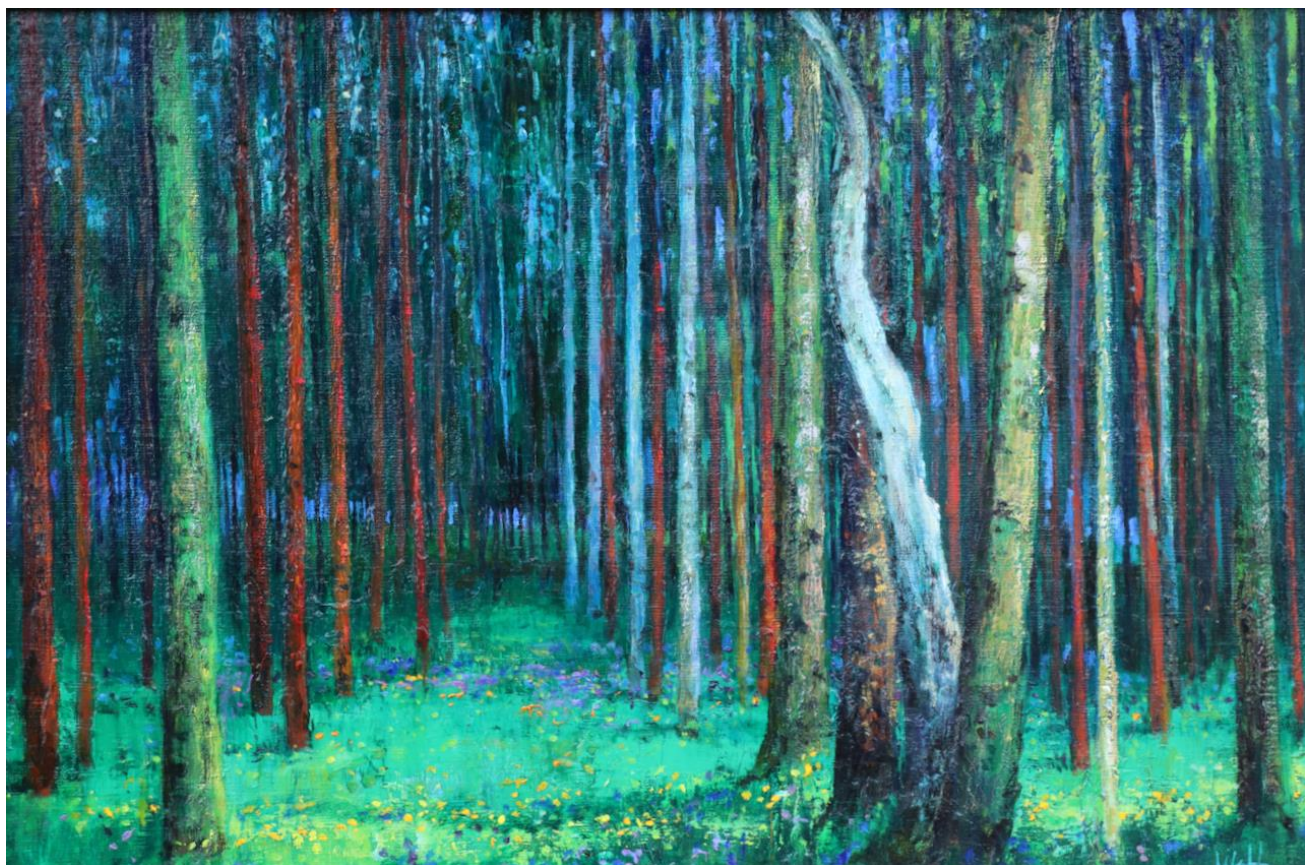
Our 70-year relationship with the Webb family has been a happy and fruitful one built on trust and friendship. It has always been exciting watching Kenneth latch on to new ideas, constantly enthusing, opening our eyes to new of Conamara and particularly his beloved garden and adjacent bogland.

Go maire tú an chéad, Kenneth!

TOM KENNY, September 2023



20. *Twilight, Derrigimlagh*
Oil on Canvas, 20x50in



29. *Where the Cuckoo Calls*, Oil on Canvas, 16x24in

There are few lovelier spring scenes than a dappled wood flooded with the heavenly haze of bluebells. In *Where the Cuckoo Calls* and *Where the Sunrays Fall*, one can really feel the warmth of the sun and hear the sounds of the woodland around you.

The grassy paths through the wood are springy underfoot and infused with the sweet, heavy scent from the flowers on either side. The truth is that these perfect havens are usually swarming with people, feasting their senses whilst the sun shines and the flowers bloom, but in Webb's paintings the wood is his alone.



19. *Iris Trio*, Oil on Canvas, 20x16in |



33. *Cascade of Poppies*, Oil on Canvas, 18x12in



No	Title	Size	€
1	A Field of Poppies, 1916	36x48in	P.O.A.
2	Derelict	14x18in	€6,950
3	Pink & Blue	12x16in	€5,750
4	Rare as Summer Snow	20x30in	€25,000
5	Summer Comes to Errelough	24x36in	€29,500
6	Tidewrack	24x36in	€35,000
7	Stone Maidens	24x36in	€35,000
8	Footsteps in a Bog	16x40in	€37,500
9	Midnight's Children	24x36in	€33,000
10	Evening Glow	10x14in	€5,250
11	Patriot	5x7in	€3,250
12	Silver Waterlily	5x7in	€3,250
13	Trilogy	5x7in	€3,250
14	Halo	5x7in	€3,250
15	Poppies and Daisies	7x5in	€2,950
16	Orange and Gold	12x16in	€5,500
17	A Glimpse of Summer	12x10in	€5,000
18	Homage to Monet	20x30in	€22,000
19	Iris Trio	20x16in	€8,000
20	Twilight, Derrigimlagh	20x50in	€45,000
21	Ancient Boulders	12x16in	€6,000
22	Ebony & Lapis	5x7in	€2,950
23	Golden Waterlily	5x7in	€2,950

24	Emerald Dawn	20x50in	€45,000
25	Eternity	24.5x36in	€35,000
26	Ancient Rocks	18x36in	€25,000
27	A Quiet Lament	21x48in	€45,000
28	Parade	20x30in	€27,500
29	Where the Cuckoo Calls	16x24in	€13,500
30	Where the Sunray Falls	16x24in	€13,500
31	Waterlily Pool	24x16in	€13,500
32	Atlantic View	16x20in	€7,750
33	Cascade of Poppies	18x12in	€6,750
34	Moonlight Homestead	12x18in	€6,750
35	Solace	10x14in	€5,000
36	Peace	10x12in	€5,000
37	Abundance	10x12in	€5,000
38	Marbled Lily Pads	9x12in	€4,500
39	Meadow's Delight	8.5x6.5in	€3,750
40	Crown	5x7in	€3,250
41	Mesmer	5x7in	€3,250
42	Jagged Rock Wall	5x7in	€3,250
43	Silver and Scarlet	9x12in	€4,500
44	Hayfield	5x7in	€3,250
45	September Evening	12x16in	€6,000
46	Tango in Blue	20x16in	€8,000



- View the full collection on www.thekennygallery.ie
- All works Oil on Canvas or Oil Canvas Board or Oil on Panel (*please enquire*)



Webb has tremendous fun creating his sweetpea paintings, playing with different colour palettes, techniques and styles. For him, they are bursts of emotion on the canvas, whether it be innocent laughter, cheekiness, passion or praise. Some may be more pensive or subdued, but each has joy in their heart and their fragrance lingers in the paint.

3. *Pink & Blue*
Oil on Canvas, 12x16in



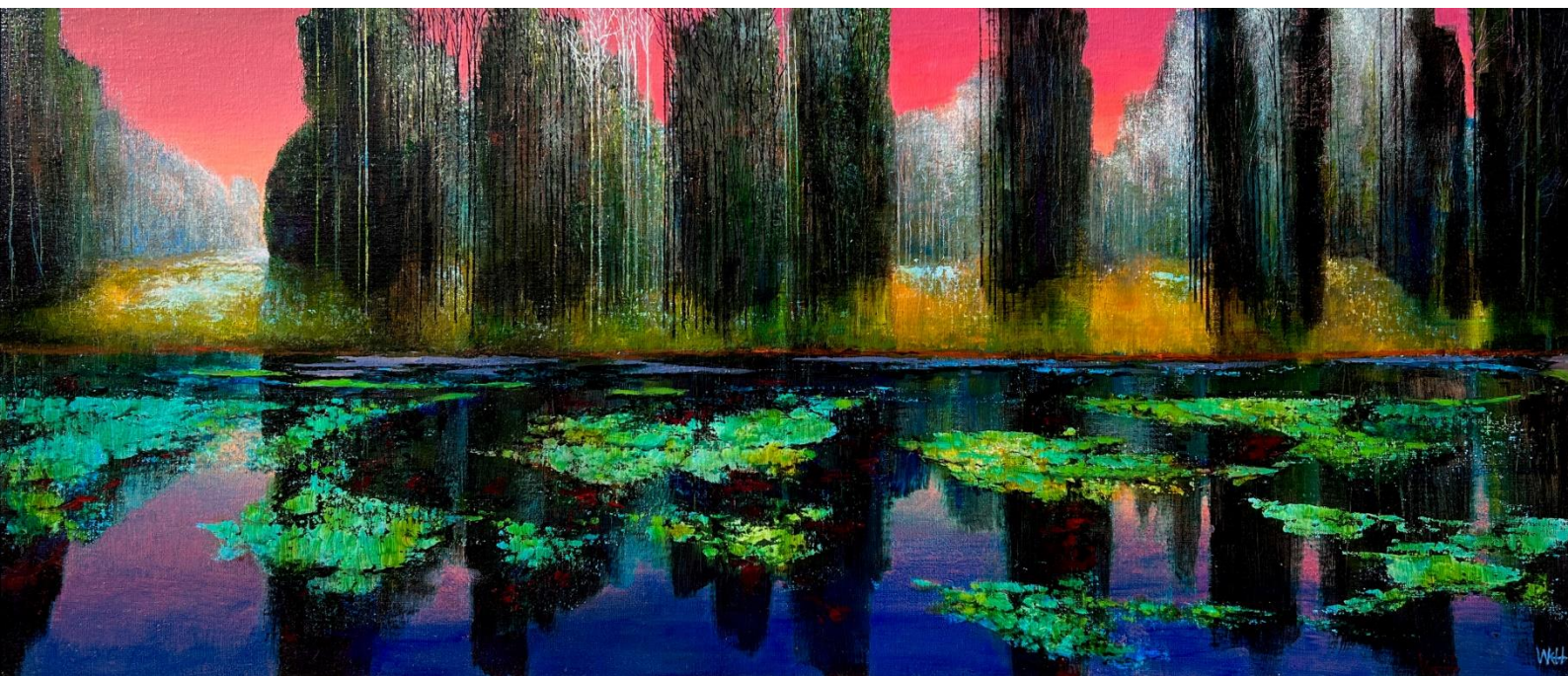
8. *Footsteps in a Bog*, Oil on Canvas, 16x40in



24. *Emerald Dawn*, Oil on Canvas, 20x50in



5. *Summer Comes to Errelough*, Oil on Canvas, 24x36in



27. *A Quiet Lament*, Oil on Canvas, 21x48in

Painted during lockdown, in his studio rather than in the wild, Webb reflected on remembered landscapes in his heart. Here, muted wintry bass tones show the peace he has found within his advancing years. The trees stand as dark sentinels, with the sky providing the colour focus, a vivid chilled orange-pink. Whilst the lilies are an early spring green, the frosty chill of late snow pervades the landscape, a reminder that the old season may yet clasp the next, before letting go entirely - perhaps an analogy of his own ageing.



46. *Tango in Blue*, Oil on Canvas, 20x16in



16. *Orange and Gold*, Oil on Canvas, 12x16in

1. *A Field of Poppies*, 1916
Oil on Canvas, 48x36in

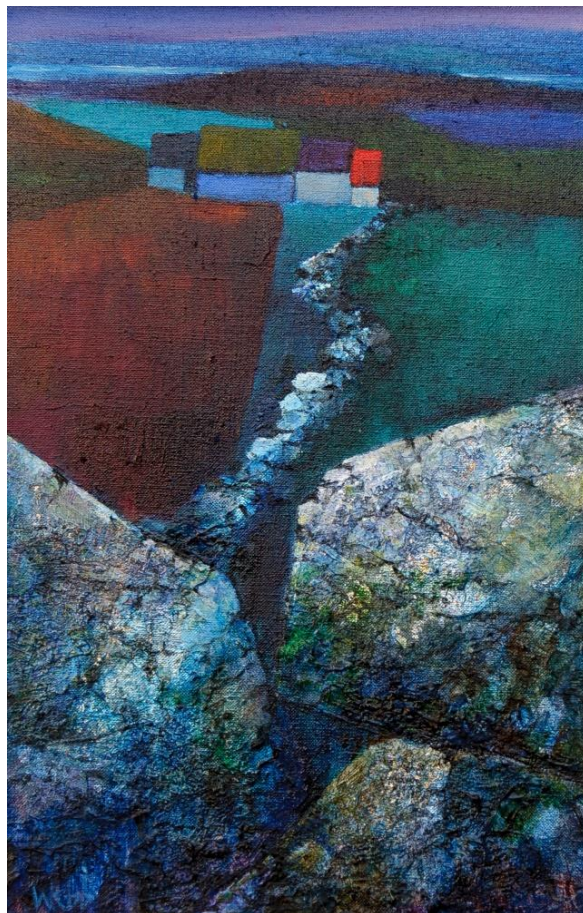
There is no theme more closely associated with Kenneth Webb than the red poppy, and this painting is one of his finest. Webb has long been drawn to the contrasting properties of this stunning flower - the almost transparent fragility of the petals against the strength and depth of their colour, the fleeting of their lives against their tenacity to bloom and thrive in the toughest of environments. Perhaps it is these qualities have led it to be uniquely symbolic of life overcoming darkness, of justice and sacrifice, the blood rising, passion taking hold. No surprise, then, that Webb remains fascinated by the poppy, and continues to struggle to capture these ethereal qualities on a canvas. Here, the intensity of colour and density of the flowers have immense impact, the overall image is one of great power - but step closer and the delicacy of each flower is there, too.







31. *Waterlily Pool* Oil on Canvas, 24x16in



34 . *Moonlight Homestead*, Oil on Canvas, 12x18in



Kenneth Webb at his easel, 2023



28. *Parade*, Oil on Canvas, 20x30in

Webb

70 YEARS AT KENNYS

2023 marks the 70th year that Webb is working with and exhibiting at Kennys, and this collection is a celebration of that milestone and rare working relationship.

The exhibition features a return to some favourite subjects for Kenneth - the bogs and bog pools, the wildflowers and rocks of Connemara – and also includes several important retrospective works to augment the vibrant new paintings.

In 1953, Kenneth Webb first walked through the door of Kennys in High Street in Galway, attracted by a splash of colour on locally

handwoven rugs hanging outside the bookshop. So began a unique gallery and artist relationship, still going strong 70 years later.

One of Ireland's most important and influential landscape painters, Webb is still painting today at age 96. His work has been described as 'homage to the secret life of colour', and he's certainly a dedicated painter, always driven to bold new experiments in paint.

His career has spanned seven decades and he has painted his way through a variety of themes over the years and into a world-wide reputation.



32. *Atlantic View*, Oil on Canvas, 16x20in

“Kenneth Webb’s work is a homage to the secret life of colour. It is healing to the eye and refreshing for the heart to encounter these paintings.” JOHN O’DONOHUE